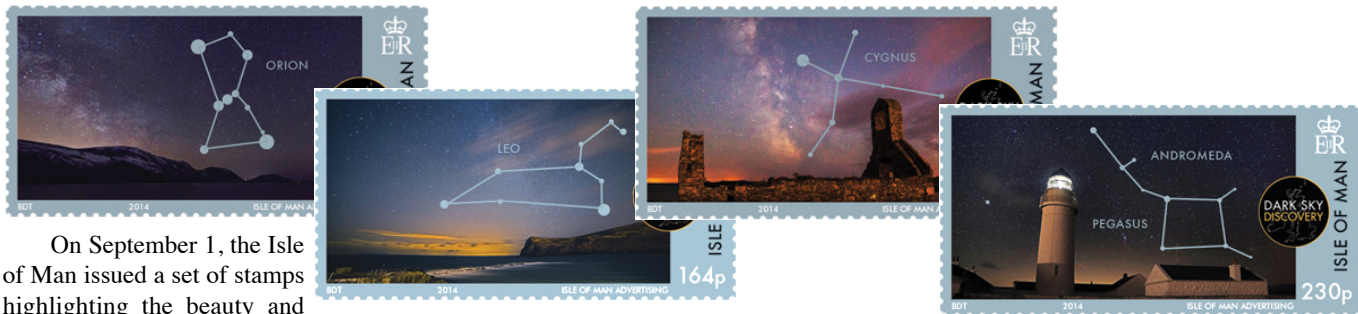


# IOM Displays Its Dark Skies



On September 1, the Isle of Man issued a set of stamps highlighting the beauty and clarity of the Manx night skies, which are acknowledged as being some of the best for stargazing in Europe.

Dark Sky status is granted only to sites that have spectacular views of the night sky. The Isle of Man now has a total of 26 such sites, by far the greatest concentration in Europe. They are granted this prestigious status by the Dark Sky Discovery Network (DSDN) based at the Royal Observatory in Edinburgh.

One of the criteria for Dark Sky Status is the ability to see the Milky Way clearly on dark clear moonless nights, which is known in Manx as “Raad Mooar re Gorry” or the great way of King Orry, commemorating the landing of King Orry in the late 11th Century.

The Manx stamp issue was produced following consultation with Howard Parkin of AstroManx. The pictures used on the stamps show spectacular images of the Manx night skies and feature some of the constellations clearly visible throughout the year from the Island’s darker skies. The stamps show four Dark Sky scenes taken from various locations on the Island across the seasons with one or more constellations superimposed on each. The stars as well as the frame of each stamp are distinct in that they are metallic. Parkin said: “I was

delighted to be able to help Isle of Man Stamps & Coins produce these beautiful stamps. They show just how clear the Manx night skies can be, and each stamp shows a different view of just what can be seen from our Dark Skies throughout the year and as such they can be used as a mini star atlas, which we believe may be unique from a philatelic viewpoint.”

The 42p stamp shows Orion, one of the most spectacular winter constellations superimposed onto an image taken from Niarbyl. The 164p shows Leo, a spring constellation and the skies from Port Erin, the 182p shows the summer constellation of Cygnus with a spectacular view of the Milky Way as seen from Fort Island and the 230p stamp shows the autumn group showing Pegasus and Andromeda with the sky from Langness.

For information on this and other Isle of Man new issues and a link to the Isle of Man postal administration website, please go to <https://www.iompost.com/stamps-coins/>.

You can also read about all previous Isle of Man 2014 issues at

<http://www.stampnewsnow.com/IsleOfManNewIssues.html>.